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CURRENT OPINION

The Love Which Is Not the Fulfilling of the Law

The *Hibbert Journal* for April has an article under the foregoing title by Constance L. Maynard. The discussion has been provoked by the present war, and especially by the anemic morality which has flooded the country in the name of pacifism. In particular Mr. Maynard has in mind a call which has been made for love and forgiveness, while at the same time there apparently is no appreciation of the moral dynamic which moves his countrymen in this conflict. He first discusses the question which is raised by the possibility of being killed. This is the question which the combatant must face. The view taken in this article is the one which is commonplace among British people, namely, "It is one of the first principles of the Kingdom of Heaven that, though human life is of value, there are things of more value." He finds it more difficult when he comes to the problem raised by the killing of other men. He points out that the position of the pacifist who calls for forgiveness in every case actually amounts to a position which insists that human pain must be spared, that human life is of supreme value, but that it is quite a secondary matter whether that life is to be spent in the service of God or of Satan. The pacifist neglects the alternatives of justice or injustice, liberty or slavery, truth or falsehood. Mr. Maynard takes the position that the belief that love stands outside all law is the error which accounts for the fallacies of the pacifists. In the course of his discussion the writer makes a distinction between religion and ethics which is quite noticeable. He maintains that the issue of the war is in the sphere of ethics and not in that of religion. This he seeks to demonstrate by inviting attention to the fact that there are both

Christians and non-Christians on each side of the trenches. The reader of this distinction may be inclined to feel that the writer would be willing to grant the pacifists their claims if the problem centered about Christians versus non-Christians. Another important thing which the writer pushes to the forefront is the necessity of being assured that the state has a real definite existence such as he can look to with approval. Mr. Maynard is satisfied that the maintenance of the British Empire is fundamentally important. Nevertheless he makes an impressive appeal that the people of his own country take seriously to heart the responsibility which the war places upon them, namely, to become worthy to be champions of their "spotless cause."

Cardinal Mercier

The *Outlook* for May 30 contains an interesting account of Cardinal Mercier. The article has this striking sentence by way of introduction: "Against the lurid and awful background of conquered Belgium one figure stands out in sharp silhouette, a personality that has succeeded in dominating the chaos of events." Mr. Gade, who has been representing the Commission for Relief in Belgium, is the writer of this article. We are told that life in many phases has fashioned Cardinal Mercier and that the war has revealed him to the world. Leo XIII chose him to teach the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas in the University of Louvain and to create the Institut Supérieur de Philosophie. One of the Cardinal's statements is this:

It is not the mission of philosophy to predict what ought to be, but to explain what is . . . to study facts, and as far as possible all the facts, those that belong to inorganic as well as to organic nature, those of history as well as those of the economic or political order; such must be

the first care of whoever aspires to establish a real philosophy. Philosophy does not go ahead of the sciences, but follows them to synthesize their results under the guidance of the first principles of human knowledge.

This view of philosophy has found expression in the preparation which the Cardinal has made for his work in philosophy. He has made diligent study of science and medicine, worked assiduously in chemical laboratories, stood beside Van Gehuchten in his famous researches into the nervous system, and attended the clinics of La Salpêtrière when Charcot was astonishing the world by his treatment of mental diseases. In his latest address to the Belgian soldiers he said to them:

St. Thomas Aquinas, the most authoritative teacher of Christian theology, proclaims that public retribution is commendable. A just war has austere beauty; it brings out the disinterested enthusiasm of the whole people, which gives, or is prepared to give, its most precious possession, even life itself, for the defence and vindication of things which cannot be weighed, which cannot be calculated, but which can never be extinguished—justice, honor, peace, liberty! . . . Have you not felt in these two years that the war, the ardent, unflagging devotion which you give it, purifies you, separates your higher nature from the dross, uplifts you to something nobler and better than yourselves?

Mr. Gade says of Cardinal Mercier: "He is nearer the heart of Belgium than anyone else, because no one knows so well what she has suffered and no one else has seen so clearly all her moral grandeur. He has been 'all things to all men'—the embodiment of patriotism and courage." "Patriotism and Endurance" is his slogan, as "Virtue and Work" is his motto. We are told that never were independence and passion for truth stronger than that shown when Cardinal Mercier denounced Cardinal von Hartmann, Archbishop of Cologne, who, despite the hundreds of undeniable and irrefutable proofs to the contrary, sub-

servient to his Kaiser, made public denial of the true fate of the deported girls of Lille. One of the noteworthy features of the Cardinal's services has been his pastoral letters, of which one of the most remarkable has been his pastoral on "The Sacred Value of Patriotism and Endurance," in which one of the highly significant sentences addressed to the people of Belgium is: "Who does not gaze with pride upon the reflection of glory from the slain fatherland?"

Christian Ethics

Christian ethics is the subject of a discussion by G. F. Barbour in the *Hibbert Journal* for April. He is impressed with the increased emphasis that, owing to the European war, has been placed on the interpretation of Christian ethics. So far as the teaching of the New Testament is concerned he is of the opinion that the view is frequently taken that violence ought to be met with weapons other than those of force. The early Christians, for instance, looked for the conquest of the world, including evil, through other agencies than the force of arms. Paul, however, accepts the use of force by magistrates as part of the divinely appointed order. From Paul's point of view there is a distinct antithesis between the "flesh" and the "spirit" which enables him to extend the antithesis to love and force. But with the abandonment of this antithesis our writer holds that the absolute distinction between love and force falls. This is due to what he considers a fact—namely, that there are an infinite series of gradations between the use of sheer, untempered force on the one hand and the pure activity of love on the other. This relation necessitates two questions in the moral consideration of any given case: First, was it impossible for the more directly spiritual energy to come into full and effective play? Secondly, if it was impossible, did the spiritual impulse maintain the mastery of its material instrument, or was

it "like the dyer's hand, subdued to what it worked in"? Mr. Barbour concludes that there must be an appeal to force, either when the moral appeal to conscience is impossible from the outset or when it has proved ineffective. He reminds his readers, however, that when the machinery of force is set going, the higher and harder way of the moral appeal is most frequently left behind. He takes pains to emphasize his view that action from spiritual motives and action involving the use of physical force are not of necessity mutually exclusive, but it is not in accord with the spirit of Christianity to allow the legal conception of responsibility to form the last word with regard to a great ethical problem. An even more subtle question is raised when the writer asks, "Granted that force may be necessary to arrest evil, can force ever really and permanently overcome evil?" His own answer to the question is in the negative, and the reason for this negative answer is that force cannot get to the roots of moral evil. But he is also convinced that the attitude of non-resistance is entirely inadequate to meet the situation of moral evil. But he is then confronted with the difficulty of discovering some principle by which evil can be assuredly overcome. The solution which he offers for this difficulty is suggested in his own words: "There is an absorbing desire, not to secure gain, but to bring help; while the trust in the natural response of the human heart to a generous appeal has passed into a deeper confidence—into faith in the Divine Power and Will to renew the hearts of men." This he understands to be the Christian way. Again the writer finds a difficulty in the proclivity of men to let selfishness and materialism so atrophy and incrust the soul that its fineness of perception is destroyed. This has led many persons to trust in the Divine Power to overcome evil, and in New Testament times it took on the apocalyptic form. Again this apocalyptic expectation is coming into vogue with

increased emphasis, but it belongs to a past world and does not satisfy. In his concluding remarks the writer takes special care to emphasize his view that in the great venture of overcoming evil the plan of Christianity is essentially positive, and for this reason the term non-resistance fails to do justice to its nature.

The Relation between Research and Interpretation

Lynn Harold Hough discusses the relation between research and interpretation in the May-June number of the *Methodist Review*. He recalls the fact that historically interpretation of the Bible has been given a new lease of life because of the practical necessity of making an author mean something quite different from what he actually meant. The effect of this knowledge upon Mr. Hough is that he finds a touch of "something sinister" about the whole history of interpretation and concludes that only a man of miraculous optimism can be entirely enthusiastic about it. The author of this article apparently has an appreciation of literature which extends beyond the limits set by the Bible, but in this treatment he is concerned with the methods of interpretation of Biblical literature. He discusses five different methods of interpretation. The first is "interpretation without research," for which he finds a classical example in the Alexandrian allegorical method. This method he understands was essentially transcendental and based on the view that the Bible contained a mechanically infallible literature. The main thing that is to be said of the allegorical method is that "whenver you meet a problem allegory gives you wings," and that what a man brings to a passage of Scripture is infinitely more important than what he finds there. Mr. Hough is not unmindful of the opportunity which the allegorical method afforded interpreters to suggest many spiritually helpful things. The second method of interpretation, which

is called "research as a check on interpretation," is exemplified by the school at Antioch, and particularly by Theodore of Mopsuestia. The latter stood for a grammatical and historical interpretation. Unfortunately the Antiochene school did not produce men of gigantic stature to perpetuate its type of activity, and, in addition, the problem, which became acute centuries later, began to emerge with respect to the difficulty of combining evangelical passion with intellectual passion. A third step in the advance of method is named "research as a substitute for interpretation." The interpretation of the Reformation degenerated into a kind of scholasticism of its own and this was responsible for a reaction. This reaction took the form of scientific study of the Bible. The keynote of this method was history rather than interpretation. In the main the latter part of the nineteenth century came nearer to achieving objectivity in Bible study than had any earlier period, and in many conspicuous instances it attained an entire freedom from prejudice in favor of tradition. However, our writer regrets that with the progress of the scientific study of the Bible there has been no successful attempt to synthesize the results of research. Accordingly a fourth method has come to the forefront which is known as "research as a preparation for interpretation." During the time which has been occupied in the scientific study of the Bible, ministers and others have had to make the best use of the Bible that they were able to, and the difficulty has been a real one. Many and varied have been the attempts to meet the difficulty, and the profoundest spirits have sought sources of certainty which left criticism free because it could not touch their position. The view which underlies this position is that the Christian religion is a fact of inner experience which authenticates its own necessary materials. Noteworthy among such efforts are those represented by Schleiermacher,

Eucken, Bergson, and Ritschlians. The mental sifting caused by all these processes has resulted in an increasing consciousness that research is by its very nature a preparation for the ultimate task of interpretation, and that the spot where research and a living experience meet is the spot where the work must be done. Finally, the writer mentions some characteristics of the interpreter as he desires him to be. He thinks the interpreter must be a man with a cosmopolitan intellectual outlook, for the reason that the work of the interpreter is done at the place where many departments of specialized activity meet. Furthermore, the interpreter must have a synthetic type of mind. Our writer understands that interpretation is synthesis, and therefore the interpreter must be a man who by temperament, by training, and by intellectual sympathy fuses various materials into an organism. He strenuously maintains that the interpreter must have candor constantly on its guard against a host of invading dishonesties. The interpreter must be alive. His task is to give expression in the terms of life and he himself must thrill with its energies. Finally, he thinks we must face the fact that the literature which we call the Bible is the creation of a powerful and passionate religious experience and can never be interpreted adequately apart from such an experience. Mr. Hough points out two dangers: On the one hand there is the tendency to indulge in hasty and unwarranted generalizations, which is the constant temptation of the impatient mind; on the other hand there is the tendency to treat research as an end in itself, and to refuse to raise the question as to the significance of the material so patiently gathered.

Peace and the World-Power

James H. Kirkland has an article in *Religious Education* for April which merits attention. His discussion centers about the present world-order, especially as it is

accentuated by the war. He analyzes the situation and indicates the extreme difficulty of determining the exact issue that is at stake in the conflict. For instance, he shows how the religious question is not the real driving force. The remarkable adjustments that have existed between the social classes heretofore thought to hold serious differences show that the war is not the resultant of the social grievances which have been brewing for the past decade or more. But, strangely enough, in the midst of the confusion of issues the warring nations have been most diligent in presenting the righteousness of their claims and in endeavoring to put on their antagonists the responsibility of beginning the war. Our writer invites his readers to recognize the fact that this whole condition of affairs attests to the increasing power of public opinion and the weight now attaching to the moral judgments of mankind. Mr. Kirkland cites the opinion of H. G. Wells as representing the view current among the people of the British Empire, that this is a war of ideas, a strife between two forms of culture. But he is not satisfied to accept this opinion as a just analysis of the facts. He admits that Germany led the way in the direction of militarism; but the lead of Germany has been followed by other nations. This has been done in the effort to offset the increas-

ing superiority of the militaristic strength of Germany. He maintains that his point of view is illustrated by the increased acceleration of larger armaments and the marshaling of nations under the name of diplomacy. In this way he thinks the militaristic conceptions came to dominate the whole life of the state and "poisoned its very dreams." The conclusion at which Mr. Kirkland arrives, therefore, is that the present world-war has resulted from the dominance of identical systems. Having interpreted the cause of the war in this way, the writer of the article proceeds to point out what he considers to be the matter of primary importance. It has to do with the settlement which is to follow the war. He says: "The evolution of society must not be strangled by artificial political lines, but must proceed to something that approaches a world-organization." Education must be given a large place in the development of a more permanent world-order. But he warns us lest education be allowed to become subservient to militarism, as it was in Germany. Furthermore, he warns us against the danger of reacting favorably on the militarism of Germany. In this connection he quotes the significant words of Norman Angell: "A country at war is led by an almost mechanical process to adopt the very morality that it sets out to fight."